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**PARTICULAR AND PROMISING: BRIEF REVIEW AND NEW OUTLOOK
OF NON-STATE-RUN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHINA**

KEYWORDS: non-state-run higher education; development tendencies; trends.

ABSTRACT. Non-state-run education in the People's Republic of China, increasingly successful as the country intensified its efforts in education system reform for more than 40 years, has become a significant powerhouse of educational innovation and is now a most active component of Chinese education with its unique emphasis on students-oriented pedagogy and services. *The Law of Promoting Non-state-run Education*, in effect since November 2016, defines non-state-run schools into two categories, those of a profit or non-profit nature, and is especially favorable to promote non-profit non-state-run higher education. The non-profit non-state-run colleges have been offered unprecedented advantages in finance, taxation and land use, and are developing side by side with public institutions of higher education in China and reciprocally with private institutions of international education. As they are cooperating with worldwide top rank colleges and top rank disciplines, Chinese non-state-run institutions of higher education have made rapid progress and will locate many more opportunities and potentials for further development.

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**ОСОБЕННОЕ И МНОГООБЕЩАЮЩЕЕ: КРАТКИЙ ОБЗОР НОВОЙ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ НЕГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО
ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В КИТАЕ**

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: негосударственное высшее образование; тенденции развития; перспективы развития.

АННОТАЦИЯ. Негосударственное образование в Китае, особенно успешное в период реформирования национального образования, длившийся более сорока лет, стало двигателем инноваций в образовании и является сегодня важным элементом образовательной системы в Китае, который уделяет особое внимание личностно ориентированному подходу в образовании и сфере услуг. Закон о *Негосударственном образовании*, введенный в ноябре 2016 г., делит негосударственные учебные заведения на два типа: коммерческие и некоммерческие. Наиболее благоприятные условия создаются для некоммерческих негосударственных учреждений высшего образования. Некоммерческие негосударственные вузы получают значительные налоговые льготы и выгодные условия аренды земли, и таким образом эти учреждения активно развиваются наряду с государственными вузами Китая и с частными международными учебными заведениями. Благодаря сотрудничеству с рейтинговыми иностранными вузами, китайские некоммерческие негосударственные учреждения высшего образования стремительно развиваются и имеют значительные перспективы.

**I. Introduction: Brief History
of Non-state-run Higher
Education in China**

Qualified human resources, crucial for sustainable economic development, come from well-rounded education. China, as a large country, has searched for financial avenues to meet the requirements of its increasingly popularized and diversified populations of education. Non-state-run colleges, funded by nongovernmental communities and individuals since the late years of 1970s, have opened up new opportunities of higher education for many people who are not able to be placed in state-run institutions. Therefore, non-state-run higher education not only undertakes some of the challenges the governments and state-run universities have no extra energy to deal with, but also helps to promote fair opportunity of higher education and educational equality to a new level. This paper

gives a brief review of non-state-run higher education in China, its history and development, analyzes the experienced hardships and successes, surveys the material and nonmaterial opportunities and challenges and considers the possible implications and relevant guidelines for the future of Chinese non-state-run higher education.

Non-state-run education in China boasts a history of more than 40 years, and since the opening and reform—when higher education in the real sense began in China about 30 years ago—has witnessed rapid development as China conducted a series of reform in its education systems. In the early 1980s, the Chinese Government adopted special policies to allow social organizations, various enterprises and institutions, qualified communities and individuals to undertake the projects of higher education. The early non-state-run institutions of higher education could only provide certain makeup services, such as test preparation or

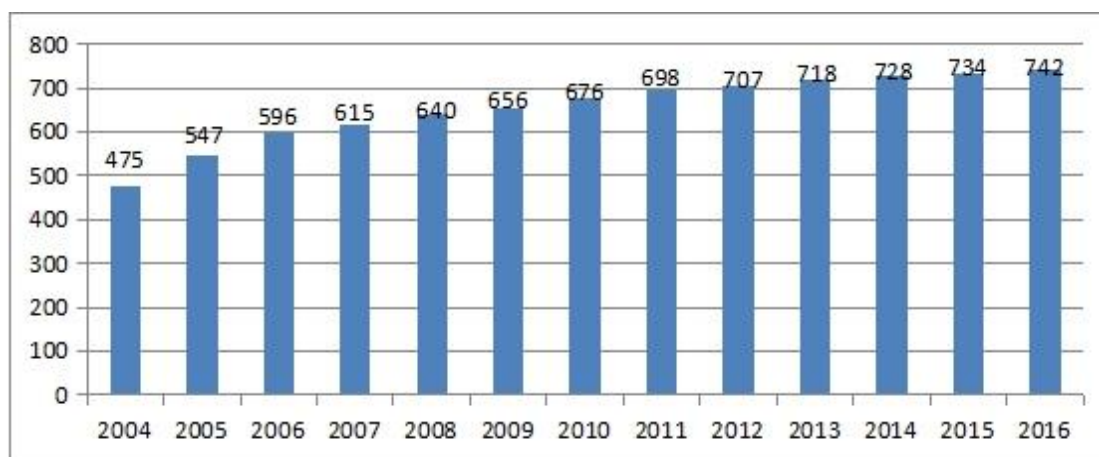
professional training, and carried out the subsidiary functions that the state-run colleges could not engage in. There were no supportive laws or policies, and the investment resources were limited because China just began to move from planning economy to market economy.

But the last two decades of the 20th century saw a prosperous development of nongovernmental investment in higher education. Meanwhile, the governments of different levels—in response to the increasing political and economic needs of such institutions, their legal status, property right, etc.—made relevant laws and policies to regularize and normalize non-state-run engagement in higher education and to protect the students, faculty and staff in such institutions with the due legal rights and political benefits.

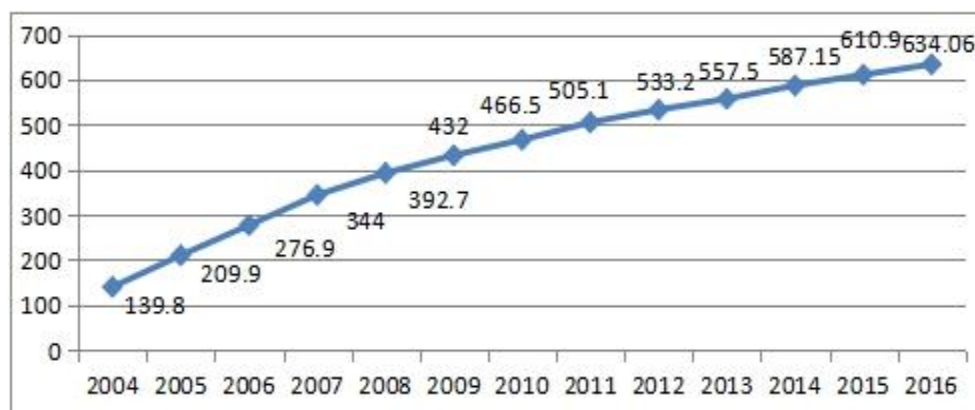
Now non-state-run institutions of higher education constitute a large portion of the country and are developing side by side, reciprocally, with state-run universities. Their achievements can be summarized in the following four aspects:

1. Stead Increase in Scale and Scope

In 2002, China passed *The Law of Promoting Non-state-run Education* which legalizes non-state-run higher education and offers financial, administrative and professional support. Since then, non-state-run higher education has had a steady increase in the numbers of institutions, faculty and students. By 2016, the number for non-state-run institutions of higher education in China was 742, a 28,6% of the national total, an increase of 56,12% than the number of 228 in 2004, with 6,340, 600 students, a 23,5% of the national total, an increase of 35,4% than the number of 2004. These colleges helped to bring up the rate of college admission nationwide to 42,7%. They have also located many new educational resources and greatly optimized the supply of these resources. Due to their interactive and innovative efforts, the demanding cause of popularizing higher education in such a large country has been accomplished to an unprecedented level.



Point 1. Numbers of Non-state-run Institutions of Higher Education 2004–2016
(from Department of Development and Planning, Ministry of Education, Statistic Bulletin of Nationwide Development of Education 2004-2016)



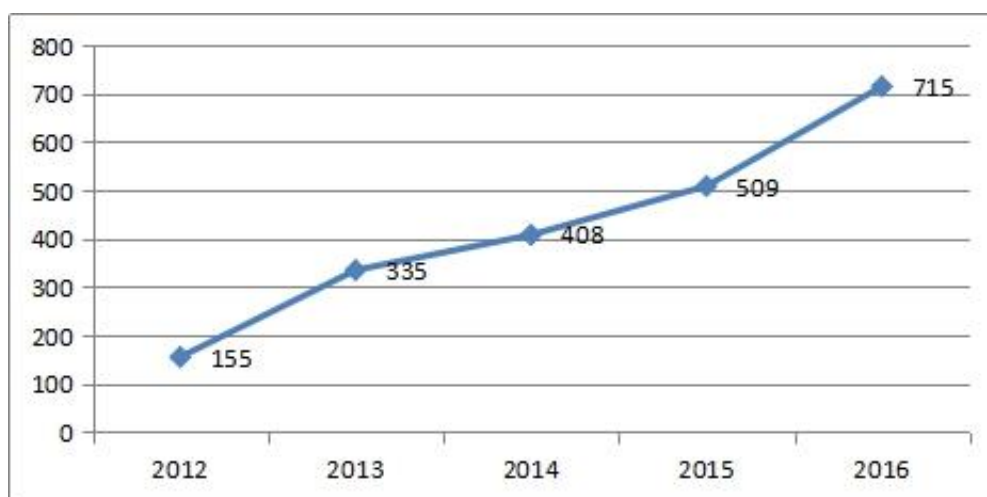
Point 2. Student Populations of Non-state-run Institutions of Higher Education 2004–2016
(from Department of Development and Planning, Ministry of Education, Statistic Bulletin of Nationwide Development of Education 2004-2016)

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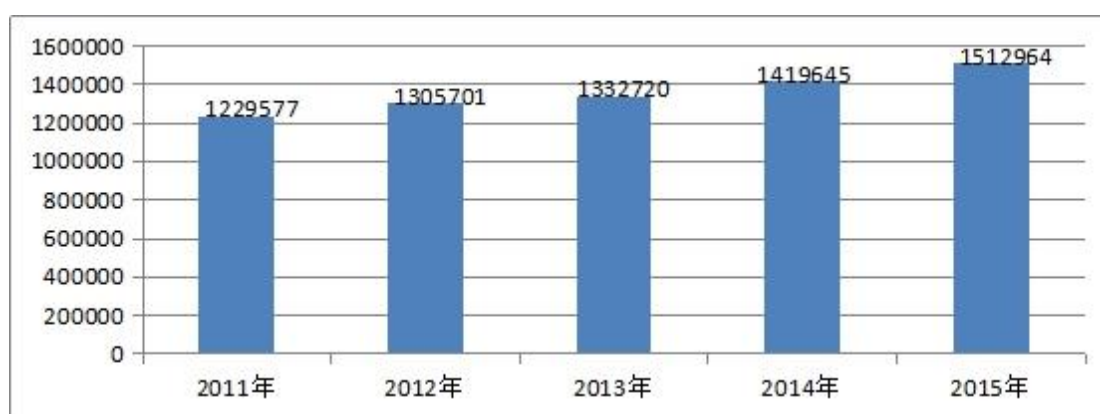
2. Constant Improvement in Educational Level

In 2011, the Ministry of Education began to look for preliminary locations for its Personnel Preparation Program for the Service of National Particular Needs. Non-state-run higher education in China was pushed to new level. Five non-state-run institutions of higher education were qualified and obtained the certificate for admitting postgraduate students and awarding postgraduate degrees. They were

Beijing City University, East University of Heilongjiang, Jilin Huaqiao University of Foreign Languages, Xijing University and Heilbei Institute of Communication College. These non-state-run institutions thus began to offer higher education at the three levels of associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees. Their admission of master students has noticeably developed rapidly. In 2016, there were 560 more studying postgraduate students than in 2012, an increase of 361.29%.



Point 3. Master Student Populations of Non-state-run Institutions of Higher Education 2004–2016 (from Department of Development and Planning, Ministry of Education, Statistic Bulletin of Nationwide Development of Education 2004–2016)



Point 4. Numbers of Graduates from Non-state-run Institutions of Higher Education 2004–2016

(from Department of Development and Planning, Ministry of Education, A General Introduction to Non-state-run Education of All Levels and Types in China in 2011–2015)

3. Outstanding Contributions to Society

Non-state-run institutions of higher education in China have brought significant positive impact on the political, economic, cultural and educational development of the country. In politics, they have provided higher education to

more people whose enhanced qualities are undoubtedly strong forces for public security and social harmony. Since 2010, they sent out 6,800,000 qualified graduates who are now working in various professions. In economy, they have mobilized large economic resources,

especially in terms of social investment in education. The fixed assets of non-state-run institutions of higher education are currently about 500 billion RMB Yuan. Their total educational investment is 100 billion RMB Yuan per year. Educational expenditure, averaged by 20,000 RMB Yuan per student, is 110 billion RMB Yuan per year. Such economic catalysts become constructive forces for the country's social and economic development, especially in the direction of sustainability and environmental reciprocity. As for education, these institutions have played facilitating roles in activating the country's educational reforms and prepared a large number of technical and professional human resources that best fit the practical qualifications of newly created jobs. The graduates from these institutions in 2015 were 1, 510, 000. Without the efforts of these non-state-run higher education institutions, the popularization of higher education in China would have had to be postponed for five to ten years.

4. Outstanding Achievements in Higher Education

As mentioned in *Outline of National Medium-and-long-term Education Reform and Development in 2010-2020* that "a notable number of non-state-run institutions of higher education should be supported to reach the qualified outstanding level", non-state-run institutions of higher education, in general, have successfully made the transition from quantitative extension to qualitative construction. Jilin Huaqiao University of Foreign Languages, where I am the president, is a typical example. It is now a key university in Jilin Province that is showing its particular momentum among the foreign language institutions in China with its qualified and outstanding faculty and graduates.

II. Timely Opportunities and Challenges for Chinese Non-state-run Higher Education

China saw tremendous progress in its non-state-run higher education. But new challenges appear constantly with the spiral upward development, because of the uncertain impact of social economy, the periodicity of higher education in China and other unpredictable factors. Chinese non-state-run higher education is experiencing another crucial moment of opening and reform, with unprecedented favorable resources and new uncompromising challenges.

1. State Policies and Social Sources that Support and Encourage Nonstate-run Higher Education

The Law of Promoting Non-state-run Education, amended by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on November 7, 2016, gives many advantages to Chinese

non-state-run education. This law also clarifies the differences of two types of non-state-run education—profit-driven type or nonprofit type—and thus connects Chinese non-state-run education to the common practices of private education institutions worldwide. Profit-driven private schools are challenged and at the same time offered more room for reform and innovation. But in this act, favorable policies are given to nonprofit non-state-run institutions in regard to finance, taxation, land use and other related issues. Such favors are especially timely for the development of Chinese nonprofit non-state-run higher education that has entered the stage of bottleneck and experienced the hardships of fund shortage. With the legalized and systematic protection, Chinese non-state-run colleges, especially those of nonprofit nature, will receive further substantial help from all sorts of supportive sources and resources so that they can be more helpful to the reform and innovation of Chinese higher education.

2. Public Pragmatism for Non-state-run Higher Education

Public funds in China snowballed for several decades, and education, because of its profit and nonprofit nature, has been a convenient area for better-off communities and individuals to convey donation and investment so as to obtain constant financial or political benefits. Non-state-run higher education in China, though increased largely, still has tremendous potentials if we consider the scale of state-run higher education and the market of human resources in China. Various sources of social capital have entered the non-state-run higher education in China, and the social forces are increasingly strong to push its further development.

3. Stable demand for Non-state-run Higher Education

Social demand for non-state-run higher education in China is also constantly strong. Chinese higher education is experiencing a difficult transition from large scale to efficient power. It needs more diversified services, on the basis of further popularization, and more dependable educational resources to satisfy the diversified choices of the student populations and the economic returns for the various investors. Since Chinese state-run colleges have almost no extra energy to quickly liberate themselves from the systematic and structural limitation, it is Chinese non-state-run institutions of higher education that will shoulder up these potentials of new development and innovation that Chinese higher education is looking forward to. After the phase of quantitative accumulation of 30 years, Chinese non-state-run higher education is now moving toward a new

orientation of qualitative transformation for the coming long periods of time.

4. Less Available Applicants but More Competitive Recruitment

After only 16 years, from 2000, in which college admission rate in China was 12.5%, to 2016 which had a college admission rate of 42.7%, Chinese higher education, according to the criteria recognized by most countries in the world, almost reached the phase of popularization. The market demand for human resources of higher education declined. In addition, there were obvious changes in the entering ages of students in the different tiers of schooling. In general, the student populations in Chinese high schools decreased. Competition between state-run and non-state-run institutions of higher education among the same types became intense and posed particular challenges to non-state-run colleges whose educational activities rely heavily on the income of tuition.

5. Surfacing Pitfalls in Chinese Non-state-run Higher Education

Specific structural definitions are needed for non-state-run higher education in the political and legal operations, such as the nature of property right, regulatory organization, etc. But they were often neglected because of the priority of other necessary issues. In the long run, these neglected issues evolved into pitfalls which must be considered now. For example, as an issue of property right, how should we assess the fixed assets of a non-state-run college and clarify their specific ownership? How should we adjust the administrative structure when the administrators of the first generation reach certain ages? How can we offer effective support and governance respectively for profit or nonprofit colleges? These and many other operational specifics must be carried out before we see further development of non-state-run higher education in China.

III. Looking Ahead: What Can We Do?

The coming outlook of Chinese non-state-run higher education relies on the cooperative actions of the governments, schools of all tiers, social organizations, interested communities and individuals. The decision-makers will make more workable, reasonable and operative public policies. The educators of non-state-run higher education will put their educational policies and goals into more detailed efficient practices, find social resources to pursue qualitative education and open up the space of sustainability through serviceable outcomes and favorable social recognition. The author believes that these following immediate actions can brighten up our future:

1. Better and More Operative Regulatory Organization.

Law of Promoting Non-state-run Educa-

tion, Initiative of the State Council to Encourage Educational Investment from Social Resources and Increase the Healthy Development of Non-state-run Education and other official documents have helped to promote non-state-run higher education in China. Policy-makers and educators are still localizing the related political, legal, technical and professional functions in the ministries of the Central Government and the related official departments of the provinces, regions and cities. Recently, the Chinese Government designated an inter-ministry committee of non-state-run education in which possible policies and practical measurements are made through the joint communications and negotiations of all ministries, as initiated by the Ministry of Education. Action plans are being made by the provincial, regional and municipal administrations of education to customize local specifications for non-state-run education. Such efforts should be continued to better our administrative and professional systems and improve our executive efficiency so that the practitioners of non-state-run education can be more assured for their career.

2. Joint and Harmonized Coordination of Profit and Nonprofit Non-state-run Higher Education

There were controversies about the types of non-state-run colleges. But in 2016, Law of Promoting Non-state-run Education was modified, and the amended law legally categorizes the two profit and nonprofit types of non-state-run higher education. Specifically, it states that “practitioners of non-state-run education can voluntarily choose the type of profit or nonprofit school”. It also clarifies the regulatory specifics: “Practitioners of nonprofit non-state-run schools cannot make profits out of schooling. All the increased value in revenue out of schooling must be put back into schooling”; “Practitioners of profit non-state-run schools can make profits out of schooling. The increased value in revenue can be put in legal use according to the related laws, such as *The Company Law of the People’s Republic of China*, and related administrative regulations.” These amendments went into effect on September 1, 2017, meaning Chinese non-state-run higher education is officially categorized as profit or nonprofit two types. Among the registered institutions of non-state-run higher education, those that choose the nonprofit type can continue their schooling according to the amended *Law of Promoting Non-state-run Education*. Others that choose the profit type are required to restart the registration process after financial settlement and, when approved, continue their educational activities. Jilin Huaqiao University of Foreign Languages, which has emphasized its nature of social benefit and nonprofit commitment, chose the

nonprofit type and looked forward to cooperating with both types of institutions to improve the general quality of Chinese non-state-run higher education. An optimistic estimation is that both types, when fully considering national and local educational advantages and disadvantages, should build reciprocal relations to better fit the requirements of diversity and choice in higher education.

3. Focused and Well-rounded Efforts to Realize Qualitative Education

Educational quality is a decisive quota to measure the institutional capacity of a non-state-run college to develop its sustainable potentials, replenish its educational resources and find new opportunities at different phases of national and international higher education. After careful investigations, the Chinese Government concluded that non-state-run education in China, which has still large room for further sustainable development, is a key point of increase for the field of Chinese education in the coming many years. Such an increase, though, is now often measured in the soft power of structural interdependence and indispensability, realistic and stratified educational goals, and instructional quality, etc., instead of the quantitative dimensions. For such a purpose, institutions of non-state-run higher education in China are working for promotional programs and projects that will energize and activate their intrinsic capacity of education while adjusting the directory services offered by the governments and public organizations. Backed up by systematic political and financial support, they are relocating more finances and organizing more human resources into such intrinsic enhancement. Meanwhile, they also make full use of all kinds of professional organizations to obtain instructive and specialized support in disciplinary construction, instructional reform, and faculty preparation and optimization. The Chinese populations become increasingly interested in joining the qualitative assessment of the educational functions of

non-state-run colleges in China and becoming directive and monitory forces for their exploratory and promising development. Most encouragingly, a number of non-state-run colleges, under their own perseverance and the large social support, will join the top rank of universities in China in the near future.

4. Steadfast and Effective Pursuit of Internationalized Education

Non-state-run colleges have comparatively higher accessibility of internationalization, which helps to readjust their educational particularity and build up their own vanguard areas of study nationwide. For a long time, they became mature in attracting quality international educational resources, due to their comparative systematic and structural advantages in the market of higher education, and explored many avenues of international cooperation and exchange programs to globalize their higher education. They have already established solid foundation for the mechanisms of faculty exchange, student exchange, bilateral accountable credit, bilateral acceptable degree and many other cooperative innovations. A major educational goal of Jilin Huaqiao University of Foreign Languages has been the qualification of internationalized graduates who can undertake international affairs and shoulder international competition and who are intelligent of international vision and international regulations. Our school has cooperated with over 120 universities in more than 20 countries. We have 25 programs of double bachelor degree, 14 programs of continual bachelor and master degrees and 4 programs of double master degrees. We had more than 1,000 international students from over 10 countries who received their degrees in our school. As China deepens its opening and reform of higher education, non-state-run colleges in China, while continuing to make use of their comparative advantages, are on the road of becoming a particular hub in the networks of higher education worldwide.

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